



# Department of Justice

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## **FORMER GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL CONVICTED OF U.S. DRUG CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – A former police officer in the Guatemalan government was convicted in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on drug charges, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division announced today.

Alvaro Rene Agustin Mejia was indicted on drug trafficking charges in the District of Columbia on August 17, 2006. Mejia and four others were charged in this indictment with conspiring to import cocaine into the U.S., and conspiring to distribute cocaine outside the U.S. with the intent and knowledge that the cocaine would be unlawfully imported into the U.S.

The trial commenced on February 25, 2008 and concluded today with the jury returning a verdict of guilty. The sentencing hearing will be scheduled for July 11, 2008. Mejia faces a sentence of ten years to life in prison.

Mejia is a former ranking police officer in the Guatemalan government. From on or about June 2006 to September 27, 2006, he conspired to smuggle 1300 kilograms of Colombian cocaine into Guatemala knowing that it would be imported into the U.S. A cooperating witness working with the Drug Enforcement Administration, who was posing as a Colombian cocaine trafficker, spoke over the telephone with a co-conspirator on several occasions, and also met with Mejia and his associates in El Salvador. These recorded calls and meetings showed that Mejia, among others, agreed to provide security for a load of 1300 kilograms of cocaine while it was hidden in and transiting through Guatemala, destined for the Mexican border on its way to the U.S.

The case was prosecuted in the District of Columbia by Narcotic and Dangerous Drug Section (NDDS) trial attorneys Paul Laymon, Kia Habisreiter, and Brian Tomney from the Criminal Division. The investigation was led by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in Chantilly, Virginia and Guatemala Country Office in close cooperation with Guatemalan law enforcement and prosecution agencies.

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